

South African Library for the Blind

we are all on the same page



**SOUTH AFRICAN
LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND**

Bringing Library and Information Services to the Visually Impaired Persons: *The Experience of the South African Library for the Blind (SALB)*

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SALB BACKGROUND

- Produces its own its reading material in **Audio and Braille**. This bridges the gap of limited reading material available in market.
- Serves the reading and information needs of visually and print-impaired persons throughout South Africa and increasingly, Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Membership is diverse and extensive. 5500 active members.
- Average of 12000 books circulated per month through:-
 - Postal delivery
 - Overdrive via the website
 - Local collections
- Audio reading material can be downloaded into different accessible mediums convenient for members

Overview

SALB supports public libraries in their role to fulfil their important contemporary function of offering a public space where activities of various types are offered and taken up in pursuit of:

- Promotion of reading and writing, with a focus on family literacy programmes
- Education and learning, formal and informal
- Participatory democracy and active citizenship
- Fostering creativity and cultural expression
- Social cohesion and the fostering of appreciation of cultural diversity; and
- Information literacy to allow citizens to participate in the knowledge society.

MINI- LIBRARIES BACKGROUND:

- Joint initiative between the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) (Library and Information Services) and SALB.
- The Eastern Cape pioneered the project in 2010 and has now been rolled out to other provinces.
- Primary objective is to provide access to reading materials through assistive devices and provides necessary technology.
- Bring the service to the people in the most tangible manner. This has been a unique opportunity for public libraries.
- Project opened opportunities for all illiterate people to benefit from the free service rendered.
- Positive feedback received from benefitting communities.

MINI-LIBRARIES BACKGROUND

OBJECTIVES:

- To make identified public libraries accessible through the provisioning of the necessary assistive technologies, reading material and other facilities
- To train and empower the relevant public library staff on how to render the service to the blind and visually impaired people
- To introduce users and librarians to information literacy skills

TYPES OF MINI LIBRARIES

- **The total number of Mini-libs to date is 143**

- **COMPREHENSIVE MINI- LIBRARIES:- 42**

Provides:

- Assistive devices like computer hardware and computer based software specifically designed for print-impaired users
- Additional assistive devices such as document readers and victor readers for audio books
- Tactile, audio and braille books

- **AGENT MINI- LIBRARIES :- 101**

Provides :

- Does not need dedicated space and advanced assistive devices
- Serves as an intermediary between SALB and the member.
- All members enrol directly with their public libraries

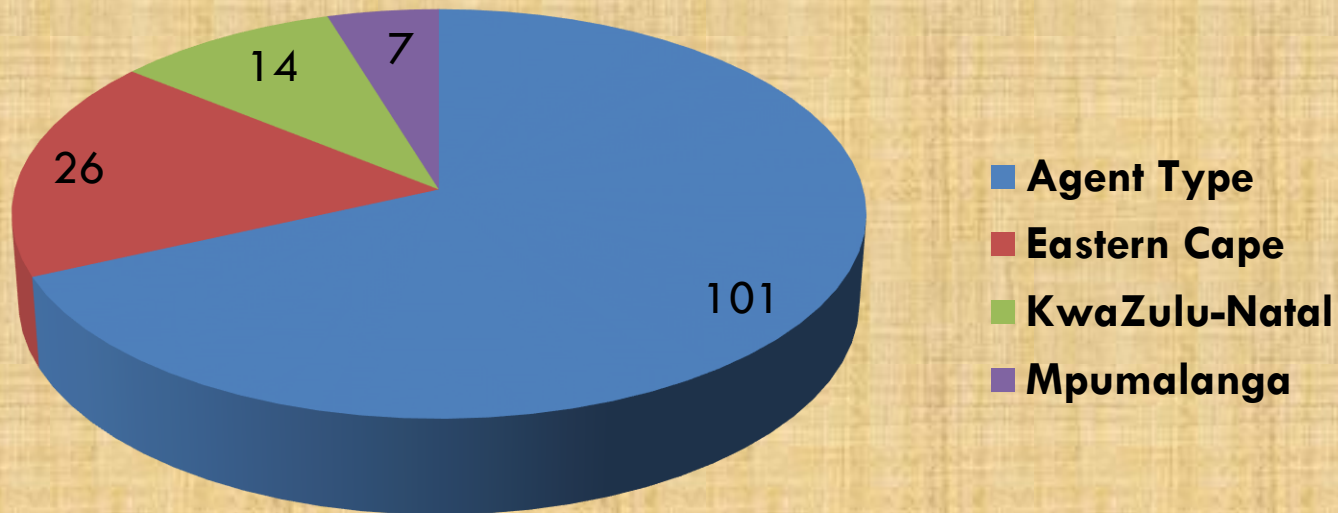
TYPES OF MINI LIBRARIES:



Comprehensive Mini library picture

TYPES OF MINI LIBRARIES

Growth Pattern



ADVANTAGES TO USERS

ADVANTAGES OF JOINING:

- ▣ Social interaction with other library members
- ▣ Access to information and technology
- ▣ Training on provided technologies
- ▣ Participation in library programmes i.e. book discussions, book clubs, etc.

PROCEDURE

- Memorandum of Agreement / Service Level Agreement
- Enrolment

- Feasibility assessment
- Library space and other requirements

- Implementation in four phases

- **Phase one:** Procurement and installations

- **Phase two:** Training of library workers and beneficiaries

- **Phase three:** Sustainability

- **Phase four:** Branding and launching

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

To efficiently implement the service specialised skills:

- ❑ Empathy & patience * dedication * confidence * strong relationship building * understanding of working with limited resources.

- ❑ Librarians might find the maintenance and provision of such a service demanding and stressful.

- ❑ Literacy levels vary greatly

TRAINING:

The training modules include:

- **Practical guidelines on how to assist the visually impaired**
 - **Theory on reading formats: braille books, daisy audio books, tactile books, record keeping and maintenance of statistics**
 - **Technology:** Daisy Player, Document reader, Jaws, Zoom text and Talking Typing Teacher
- Training courses creates awareness to the whole community about library activities and integration of library members with the sighted peers.

TRAINING:



Training Session: Pictures

PROJECT IMPACT:

FROM THE LIBRARY USERS APPROACH:

- Training focuses on human resources development and personal encounters
- Counts & measures of statistics demonstrate how much the library is used



SUCCESSSES & IMPACT

- Meeting the mandate of public libraries: SERVING ALL MEMEBERS OF THE COMMUNITY
- Enriching lives and making significant impact in a tangible manner
- Increased interest in reading
- Strengthened campaign to establish mini-librs
- Establish strong public-private partnerships
- Long term investment towards economic development

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Programmes are evaluated to ascertain that they are:-
 - Achieving the objectives and declared goals of the mini library
 - Meeting the needs of the community
 - Able to meet the changing needs
 - Ensure that they are adequately resourced
 - Cost effective
 - In need of improvement , new direction or redefinition

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Performance indicators are primarily derived from five types of measures:-

- Input measures
- Process measures
- Output measures
- Outcomes
- Impacts

CHALLENGES

- There is limited access to information
- Transport problems to visit the library
- Lack of internet services more specifically in rural poor areas
- More computer training required
- Limited titles in indigenous languages
- Limited digital rights access and copyright laws which hampers the conversion of resources into formats suitable for the print- impaired

CONCLUSION

- Meeting the SALB Mandate
- Support the vision of the National Government to improve the quality of life of all South African citizens.
- Learning Opportunities
- Partnerships

Thank you!

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